

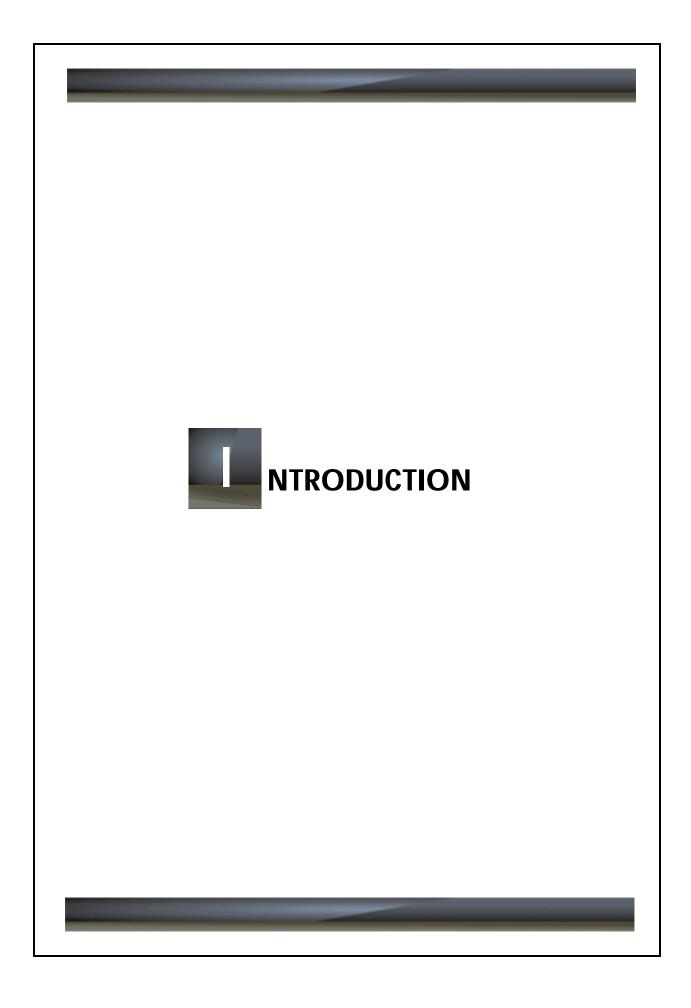
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Leveraging improvements in the Court's technology and organizational infrastructure, major enhancements continued in the areas of customer service and the administration of the Court's caseload. Notable achievements in 1999 include:

#### ! Online Case Files Become Available District-Wide

With the introduction of document imaging in the Santa Ana and Riverside Divisions, online case files became available to the public at all Court divisions. Online case files allow the public to view and/or print electronic copies of case documents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from any computer utilizing a standard Internet browser. Demonstrating strong public acceptance of the availability of online case files, webPACER usage increased to record levels in 1999. [See page 17]

# ! All Divisions Equipped With Video Hearing Technology

The use of courtroom video hearing technology expanded during 1999 to include the Northern Division, completing a project to provide video access for judicial proceedings in all divisions of the Court. Video technology affords the district greater flexibility in managing its caseload, since cases can be assigned amongst divisions based on workload rather than geography. Video broadcasting and other innovative applications of video technology also were introduced during the year. [See page 40]

## ! Near Record Number of Bankruptcy Cases Filed in 1999

With 101,472 bankruptcy cases filed during 1999, the district recorded the fourth consecutive year in which over 100,000 cases were filed. While the number of bankruptcy cases filed declined 15.5% from the record 120,063 bankruptcy cases filed in 1998, the 1999 caseload represents a remarkable 89% increase over the number of cases filed just 10 years ago. [See page 45]

#### Major Reduction in Caseload Accomplished

The Court's pending caseload was reduced to 51,741 bankruptcy cases by December 1999, a reduction of 15% from the 61,090 cases pending at the beginning of the year. The caseload was reduced a remarkable 50% from the high of 103,207 cases pending in 1992. This reduction occurred in spite of the 101,472 cases filed in 1999, the fourth highest in the Court's history. [See page 45]

# • Chief Judge Receives Honor

The San Fernando Valley Bar Association recognized Chief Judge Geraldine Mund's longstanding contributions to the legal community by honoring her as the 1999 "Judge of the Year." [See page 9]

#### Santa Ana Division Relocates to New Quarters

On January 19, 1999, the Santa Ana Division opened its doors to the public in the newly completed Ronald Reagan Federal Building and United States Courthouse. The move to the new building accomplished the Long Range Plan objective to upgrade all Bankruptcy Court facilities in the Central District. [See page 27]

## Court Successfully Completes Y2K Upgrades

By August 1999, the software applications used in the management, cashiering, and calendaring of the district's bankruptcy cases were brought into Year 2000 (Y2K) compliance. Other Court software also was reviewed and upgraded to Y2K specifications during the year. Following testing, computers that were not Y2K compliant were replaced throughout the Court. [See page 39]

## • Santa Ana Becomes Third Division to Offer *Pro Bono* Program

The Santa Ana Division introduced a *pro bono* program in cooperation with attorneys in Orange County. Santa Ana becomes the third division to offer a *pro bono* program following the introduction of programs in the Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley Divisions in 1997. [See page 10]

#### • Train-the-Trainer Comes to Los Angeles

In an effort to improve the training skills of trainers throughout the district, the Court piloted a program that was previously only available at the Administrative Office's Technical Training and Support Division (AO-TTSD) in San Antonio, Texas. For this program, an AO-TTSD Training Specialist was brought to the Court to conduct a week-long workshop for 16 Court staff, resulting in substantial cost savings by reducing travel expenses. [See page 35]

## • Excellent Docketing Performance Becomes Standard

In 1999, the Clerk's Office docketed 98% of all items (excluding automated entries) within two days of filing. This compares with 96% in 1998 and 59% in August 1995 when this type of tracking began. [See page 46]

## Court Recognized for Innovation and Charitable Contributions

The Los Angeles Federal Executive Board acknowledged the Court with two awards: a team award for the Court's innovative integration of imaging and webPACER into existing operations and a second award for outstanding contributions to the Combined Federal Campaign, a charitable contribution program sponsored by the federal government. [See page 50]

# Court Develops Orientation Program

The Court developed and implemented an orientation program for newly hired personnel. New employees are provided with a one-day overview of the Court, employee benefits, and office policies and procedures. In addition to the improved communication of information to the employees, the program results in more timely and efficient processing of paperwork related to the newly hired staff. [See page 30]

# Mediation Program Continues to Assist the Court and Litigants

The Bankruptcy Mediation Program, thought to be the largest program of its type in the nation, continued to thrive. During 1999, a revised general order was approved that modified various aspects of the Program. [See page 12]

## Judicial Workload Equalization Program (JWEP) Continued

As part of a program designed to equalize judicial workloads within the Ninth Circuit, the district continued to assign cases to designated judges from other districts within the Circuit. In 1999, 200 adversary proceedings were assigned from the Riverside Division to judges in Oregon. [See page 16]

## • Emergency Reference Guide and Evacuation Kit Distributed to all Divisions

The Clerk's Office developed an emergency evacuation kit to improve management's ability to respond quickly and effectively in emergency situations. Distributed to all Deputies-in-Charge, the kit features an *Emergency Reference Guide*, a cellular telephone, and other materials necessary for providing skeletal services. [See page 29]

## Public Continues Appreciation of Customer Service

As measured by the Court's Customer Service Questionnaire, 92% of the respondents rated the overall service of the Court as excellent. [See page 21]



The mission of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California is to serve the public by:

- ! Resolving matters referred to the Court in a just, efficient, and timely manner
- ! Supplying prompt and accurate information
- ! Responding fairly and courteously to the needs of the entire community
- ! Providing leadership in the administration of justice in the bankruptcy system

In fulfilling our mission, the Court recognizes the importance of:

- ! Demonstrating respect for the dramatic impact that bankruptcy has on the lives of our customers
- ! Instilling confidence in the competence, impartiality, and ethics of the entire Court



he Bankruptcy Judges of the Central District of California



From Top to Bottom, Each Row Left to Right: John J. Wilson (Retired), John E. Ryan, Vincent P. Zurzolo, James N. Barr, Arthur M. Greenwald, David N. Naugle, Alan M. Ahart, Thomas B. Donovan, Lisa Hill Fenning, Robin Riblet, Erithe A. Smith, Robert W. Alberts, Mitchel R. Goldberg, Samuel L. Bufford, Geraldine Mund (Chief Judge), Ernest M. Robles, Lynne Riddle, Calvin K. Ashland (Deceased), Kathleen March, Barry Russell, Kathleen T. Lax

Photo not available for public viewing.

Ellen Carroll and Meredith Jury

Photo not available for public viewing.